

Report to

**Joint Legislative Oversight Committee On
Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance
Abuse Services, House of Representatives Appropriations
Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, Senate
Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services,
and the Fiscal Research Division**

On

**Implementation of Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)
Assessment Tool Pilot Project**

Session Law 2009-451, Section 10.12(f)

May 1, 2010

**Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities
and Substance Abuse Services**

**Report On
Implementation of Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) Assessment Tool Pilot Project**

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Session Law 2009-451, Section 10.12(f), requires the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to submit a report on the progress of the implementation of the Supports Intensity Scale™ Assessment Tool. *The report shall include the following:*

- a. *The infrastructure that will be needed to assure that the administration of the assessment tool is independent from service delivery, the qualifications of assessors, training and management of data, and test-retest accountability.*
- b. *The cost to (i) purchase the tool, (ii) implement the tool, (iii) provide training, and (iv) provide for future expansion of the tool statewide.*

The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS) began implementation of the SIS Pilot Project in April 2008. The objectives of this effort include: improving the assessment of individual service and support needs, and to more reliably inform the person centered planning process. The SIS assessment tool is a proven valid and reliable assessment instrument that measures the intensity of an individual's support needs in critical areas resulting in specific information that assists individuals and support teams with identifying the unique strengths and support needs of the individual. The long-range plan for the system-wide use of the SIS assessment tool is to assist the MH/DD/SAS with person centered planning for individuals, individual budgets and for use in determining intensity of support needs related to resource allocation.

The Supports Intensity Scale™ was developed over a period of five years by a team of national experts endorsed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the world's leading organization since 1876 for professionals in the developmental disabilities field. The SIS assessment tool is a multidimensional scale designed to determine the pattern and intensity of an individual's support needs. The SIS was specifically designed to: a) assess support needs; b) determine the intensity of needed supports; c) monitor progress, and d) evaluate outcomes of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The SIS is not intended to measure an individual's deficits, but rather, focuses on the supports needed for the individual to fully participate in every day life successfully within their home and community. The SIS assessment results presents a graphic representation of an individual's support needs across six life-activity domains: home living, employment, community living, health and safety, lifelong learning, and social activities. It also produces a composite score reflecting an individual's overall intensity of support needs relative to others with developmental disabilities. The assessment information gained

assists the planning team in developing individualized support plans that are responsive to the needs and choices of individuals with disabilities.

Since January 2009, the MH/DD/SAS has had one full time contractual position for the SIS Pilot Project to provide coordination and management of the project. The DMH/DD/SAS has been successful in the development and expansion of the project. This has involved the following activities:

- Recruitment and training of a minimum of 20 SIS administration practitioners ;
- Development of an effective supervision model for use with the SIS practitioners;
- Development of curricula and provision of SIS overview training to the seven pilot Local Management Entities (LMEs), case managers and other provider staff;
- Development of an informational packet and distribution plan about the SIS instrument for use by the pilot LME(s);
- Development of a SIS specific web page on the MH/DD/SAS website;
- Maintenance of an active working relationship with the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD, the sponsoring organization of the SIS), to ensure that the implementation meets evidence-based practice guidelines and to maintain the SIS assessment tool's validity during implementation;
- Review and analysis of the AAIDD database maintained on completed NC SIS assessments;
- Provision of information and reports regarding the completion of SIS assessments within the seven pilot LME(s);
- Consultation with DMH/DD/SAS staff and stakeholders regarding the SIS tool and the SIS Pilot project;
- Expansion of the use of the SIS assessment tool beyond the seven pilot LME(s) to include all LME(s) specific to individuals on the Support Waiver; and,
- Trouble shooting and resolution of system barriers.

The DMH/DD/SAS utilizes licensed independent practitioners, who are directly enrolled with Medicaid, with at least two years of experience working with adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to conduct SIS Assessments. SIS practitioners receive thirteen hours of SIS training prior to completing SIS assessments, and receive annual refresher training. SIS practitioners are also trained in entering completed assessment data into the AAIDD secured online SIS database. The DMH/DD/SAS has policies in place to ensure the administration of the SIS assessment tool is independent from service delivery. The majority of the SIS practitioners are in private practice and are therefore independent of provider agencies delivering services. However, SIS practitioners that provide services to provider agencies are not permitted to conduct SIS assessments for individuals served by that provider agency.

The implementation of the SIS Pilot Project has been focused on seven LME(s). The seven LME(s) include: Durham, East Carolina Behavioral Health, Five County, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Sandhills, and Smoky Mountain. The intent of the SIS Pilot Project was to methodically implement the use of the SIS in designated LME(s) by providing focused support and technical assistance to the LME(s) and SIS practitioners, in order to build the needed community capacity and infrastructure. While the seven LME Pilot sites continue to benefit from ongoing support and assistance they have gained knowledge and built the community capacity needed to operationally manage the use of the SIS assessment tool.

The DMH/DD/SAS has expanded the use of the SIS assessment tool beyond the seven Pilot LME(s). This expansion is currently intended for individuals receiving services within the Supports Waiver. The purpose of this expansion is to provide opportunities for SIS assessments to be available for individuals to assist case managers and planning teams with gaining valuable information for use in planning services and support for individuals. In addition, the use of the SIS assessments will support individuals who have an interest in Self-Direction as the information gathered from the SIS assessment will assist the individual and support team with determining support needs related to participation in Self-Direction.

The table below represents the numbers of Supports Intensity Scale assessments that have been administered to individuals located within the seven Local Management Entities Pilot sites, in addition to those assessments that have been administered to individuals located within the other non-pilot LME(s).

Pilot LME	Completed as of 02/28/2010
Durham	68
ECBH	52
Five County	72
Guilford	33
Mecklenburg	115
Sandhills	146
Smoky Mountain	8
Subtotal	494
Non-Pilot LME	
Alamance	6
OPC	4
Southeastern Region	1
Total	505

Next steps for the implementation of the SIS include:

- Continued expansion of knowledge and capacity for individuals, families, LME(s), providers, and other stakeholders across the state;
- The expansion of the SIS for individuals who have support needs resulting in an annual cost of CAP-MR/DD service in excess of \$75,000 per year;
- Further expansion for all individuals on the Comprehensive and Support waivers over the next three years;
- Re-assessment of individuals previously assessed every two years; and
- Ongoing comprehensive review of data collected per assessments in comparison to service costs and the development of a resource allocation methodology.

The DMH/DD/SAS is projecting over the next three years the completion of SIS assessments for approximately 11,500 individuals. The infrastructure needed to assure the continuation of the use of the SIS assessment tool across the system to meet the projected outcomes includes several components. These components include; one full time position to manage the implementation and management of the SIS; one full-time administrative support position to assist with coordination of training, website management, data processing and analysis; AAIDD License fee at \$167.00 per practitioner *per year* for 35 practitioners and the cost of the SIS assessment tools.

The table below represents the infrastructure costs needed to assure the continuation of the use of the SIS assessment tool across the system.

<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>Primary Responsibilities</i>	<i>Annual Costs</i>
One Full-Time SIS Coordinator Position	Manage the overall implementation and management of the SIS	\$90,000
One Full-Time Administrative Support Position	Assist with coordination, training, website management, data processing and analysis	\$50,000
AAIDD License Fee	License fee of \$167.00 each year for 35 SIS Practitioners	\$5,845
SIS Assessments	Assessment tool cost of \$11.91 for 11,500 assessments	\$136,965
	Total Annual Cost:	\$282,810

In summary, the SIS assessment tool is a proven valid and reliable assessment instrument that provides specific information that assists individuals and support teams with identifying the specific strengths and support needs of the individual. The DMH/DD/SAS has been successful at implementing the use of the SIS assessment over the past two years in the seven pilot LME sites and has completed the SIS assessment on a total of 505 individuals. There are 20 active SIS practitioners and recruitment and training of new practitioners is ongoing. There have been identified system barriers that have been minimized or resolved. The knowledge and capacity within the LME(s) regarding the use of the SIS assessment tool has been established with the seven pilot LME(s) and is being developed with the expansion to the non-pilot LME(s). The DMH/DD/SAS is committed to the ongoing implementation of the use of SIS assessment tool and the improvement in services and supports this effort may provide.